IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 14-16, 19, 21, 34 and 35 and AMEND claims 1-3, 18, 20, 22 and 23 in accordance with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) A service execution method comprising:

receiving a service request from a user;

obtaining load information of a plurality of server ~~device corresponding to the service request~~ devices from a device ~~for~~ managing the load ~~information of the~~ each server device; ~~and~~

~~requesting another server device to process the service request and sending electronic mail to the user, if it is judged that a load on the server device included in the load information is higher than a predetermined value~~

processing the service request received from the user at one of the server devices to obtain an immediately processed result;

returning the immediately processed result to the user without using electronic mail if the load information indicates that the load of said one of the server devices is not higher than a predetermined threshold;

· adding the service request received from the user to a queue of pending service requests if the load information indicates that the load of every server device is higher than the predetermined threshold;

processing one of the pending service requests in the queue to obtain a postponed result; and

returning the postponed result to a requesting user of said one of the pending service requests by electronic mail.

2. (Currently Amended) The service execution method according to claim 1, further comprising[[:]] ~~obtaining load information of the other server device from a device for managing the load information of the other server device; and~~ sending a process delay notification to the user ~~if it is judged that a load on the other server device is higher than the predetermined value~~ when the service request received from the user is added to the queue as a new pending service request.

3. (Currently Amended) The service execution method according to claim 1, ~~further comprising:adding the service request with respect to which the process delay notification is sent, to an end of a queue for holding service requests with respect to which the process delay notification is sent; and~~ wherein said processing ~~a~~ of one of the pending service ~~request at head of the queue by the server device if it is judged that the load information~~ requests is performed by one of the server ~~device obtained from the device for managing~~ devices if the load information indicates that the load of said one of the server devices is ~~lower~~ not higher than the predetermined ~~value~~ threshold.

Claims 4-17 (Canceled).

18. (Currently Amended) A service execution apparatus for use with a plurality of server devices, said service execution apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a service request from a user;

means for obtaining load information ~~of~~ indicating a load of each server device ~~for processing the service request~~;

means for determining, based on the obtained load information, whether ~~or not a load on~~ the load of each server device ~~included in the load information~~ is higher than a predetermined ~~value~~ threshold;

means for causing one of the server devices to process the service request received from the user to obtain an immediately processed result that is returned to the requesting user without using electronic mail if the determining means determines that the load of said one of the server devices is not higher than the predetermined threshold;

means for adding the service request to a queue of pending service requests if the determining means determines that the load of every server device is higher than the predetermined threshold; and

~~means for requesting another server device to process the service request and sending electronic mail to the user, if it is judged that the load on the server device is higher than the predetermined value~~

means for causing one of the server devices to process one of the pending service requests in the queue to obtain a postponed result that is returned by electronic mail to a requesting user of said one of the pending service requests.

Claim 19 (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) The service execution apparatus according to claim ~~19~~ 18, further comprising:

means for sending a process delay notification to the user ~~if it is judged that the loads on both the server device and the other server device are higher than the predetermined value~~ when the adding means has added the service request received from the user to the queue as a new pending service request.

Claim 21 (Canceled).

22. (Currently Amended) The service execution apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the server ~~device and the other server device include~~ devices comprise respective content storage devices ~~for~~ storing ~~content corresponding to the service request from the user, said content storage devices including means for holding~~ identical content kept synchronized with each other.

23. (Currently Amended) The service execution apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the ~~content is synchronized~~ server devices synchronize the content storage devices by transmitting/receiving ~~a difference in updated content~~ differential updates to and from each other.

Claims 24-35 (Canceled).